

Tipperary Students Prove Bright Sparks at MSD Bright Ideas Competition

Friday, 21st May 2015: 13 students from Tipperary travelled to MSD, Ballydine, Clonmel recently to present their projects at the inaugural Bright Ideas Competition. The Tipperary natives stole the show with three winning projects, and four projects placed as finalists.

Bright Ideas, a science competition run and managed by MSD, Ballydine, Clonmel, encourages second level students to submit innovative science and technology ideas and in the process gain recognition for their efforts. The top 17 entries were invited to MSD Ballydine to present their work whereby an award ceremony followed.

Second year students, Estelle Parkinson, Ellen O'Donnell and Alice Ryan from Presentation Convent, Thurles were awarded €500 for their project, "A device to prevent lives being lost to slurry fumes." which placed first the **junior category**.

Students were awarded €500 for first place, €250 placing second and €150 in third place.

These included;

Intermediate category:

- 1st place: Transition year students, Jayne Dunne and Frances O'Connell – "Lower Carbon Farming". Presentation Convent, Thurles.
- 2nd Place: Michelle Ryan and Caoimhe Lanigan – "Assessing the effect of E-cigarettes." Presentation Convent, Thurles.
- 3rd place: Megan Fitzgerald – "Study of the affects of ammonia on horses." Presentation Convent, Clonmel.

Senior Category:

- 1st place: Fifth year students, Eibhlin Vaughan and Caroline Fogarty – "The Forgotten Backgarden." Presentation Convent, Thurles.
- 2nd Place: Sixth year students, Mary O'Connor and Charlotte Hatton – "A comparative study of the nutritional content of milk between cows on varying diets." Presentation Convent, Thurles.
- 3rd place: Fifth year student, Francesca Onorato – "Food is Culture." Presentation Convent, Thurles.

Winners were presented with their prizes by Ger Carmody, site lead at MSD's facility in Ballydine, who commented; "*The quality and the development of the ideas proved to be of a very high scientific standard and made judging very difficult. While many site personnel viewed the projects and marvelled at the topics and ingenuity of the ideas, it was the confidence and knowledge of these students in discussing their projects and fields which really impressed our judging panel.*"

We are delighted with the success of the Bright Ideas competition in its first year and the enthusiasm for science amongst students in the community. MSD is committed, as a core part of its ethos and approach, to supporting innovation in science and technology and we are privileged to support young people and their projects that could potentially make a real difference."

The Bright Ideas competition, a new science competition run and managed by MSD, Ballydine, Clonmel, encouraged second level students in the three designated categories Junior (1st-3rd Year), Intermediate(TY) and Seniors (4th and 5th Year) to submit innovative science and technology ideas; in the process gain recognition for their efforts.

The competition is designed for students to provide outlet for bright ideas and provide candidates with an opportunity to have their projects reviewed , assessed and receive constructive feedback on how to make an idea better from a panel of professionals in various roles across the MSD business. The project is part of MSD's aim to promote and foster innovation and entrepreneurship, along with providing mentoring, to interested candidates to enter next year's BT Young Scientists along with promoting careers in science.

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Notes to the Editor

About MSD

MSD, known as Merck in the United States and Canada, has operations in more than 140 countries. In Ireland, MSD employs over 2,000 people across its five sites in Dublin, Carlow, Cork, Tipperary and Wicklow. Its extensive Irish operations encompass manufacturing, commercial and marketing facilities.

MSD is a leader in healthcare, dedicated to helping the world be well through a wide range of innovative health solutions. This includes the development, production and distribution of prescription medicines, vaccines and biologic therapies as well as animal health products.

MSD's commitment to research and to increasing access to healthcare across the world is demonstrated by clearly focused policies, far-reaching programmes and life-enhancing partnerships.